BACKGROUND

Torture and Ill-treatment is systematic and widespread in Nigeria. It takes place both as a measure to force confessions from criminal suspects and as a result of the general conditions of detention in Nigeria’s Prisons. The concerns outlined in the Report by the Special Rapporteur on Torture from 2007, including amputation and canning in Sharia Law, detainees held in overcrowded and unsanitary environments, long periods of pre-trial custody, arbitrary and widespread torture by law enforcement officials are still applicable. Physical torture is a common practice in police detention facilities where for reasons of inadequate forensic facilities, inadequate capacity, training and oversight, the majority of detainees experience torture. It has been estimated that over 90% of detainees in police custody experience physical torture. Furthermore, prison conditions and treatment of detainees and prisoners often amount to psychological torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.

On 12 December 1997, by resolution 52/149, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 26 June the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, with a view to the total eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, (resolution 39/46), annex, which entered into force on 26 June 1987.

Nigeria has ratified this convention and it has been absorbed into our 1999 Constitution. Furthermore, a National Committee on Torture was established for the prevention of torture at the
domestic level. The committee is mandated amongst others to receive and consider complaints on torture; conduct visits to places of detention and examine allegations of torture therein; review the treatment of persons in detention with a view to prevent torture; develop a national anti-torture policy and propose an anti-torture legislation. There is also a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) established for the promotion, protection and enforcement of human rights in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution.

Unfortunately, Nigeria as a State offers no rehabilitation services to support victims of torture. PRAWA is one of few Civil Society Actors providing such services. Thus, PRAWA has overtime worked to provide treatment/rehabilitation and support for torture victims using the following medium:
• Established counseling rooms in all its centres in Nigeria to meet the psychological needs of victims of torture;
• Conducted research and advocacy on issues of torture, justice, prisons and security sector reform; and
• Conducted human rights monitoring of detention facilities.

The vision statement of PRAWA alone speaks of the desire for the emergence of “a humane society that corrects and empowers to prevent Crime, Violence and torture.

One of PRAWA’s recent project interventions, the Oak Project, undertook the following activities:
- Standing up for survivors of torture and ensuring that they are supported in their efforts to rebuild their lives;
- Advocacy visits to relevant agencies with detention facilities on the need to avoid torture;
- Implementation of Police based trainings/workshops on promoting human rights and prevention of torture.

PRAWA’S WORK IN THE AREA OF TORTURE PREVENTION/ERADICATION

What measures is Nigeria taking to ensure that all victims of torture and ill-treatment have effect access to holistic rehabilitation services?

Nigeria as a State Party should fully implement its obligation under Article 14 of the Convention against Torture on rehabilitation services for torture victims by:
- Integrating specialized and holistic rehabilitation into the public health system;
- Training health personnel in the area of provision of rehabilitation services.

PROPOSED QUESTION

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION